

Q: What is novel coronavirus (COVID19)?

A: Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: Reported illnesses have ranged from **mild symptoms to severe illness** and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- pneumonia

Q: How is it spread?

A: The virus can spread from person-to-person if someone has been exposed to a confirmed case and/or has **a travel history** to an affected region experiencing outbreaks.

- Between people who are in close contact with a confirmed case (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Q: How easily does the virus spread?

A: How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably communities where there are cases (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas in the world and some states.

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Individuals who are experiencing symptoms and may have traveled to [areas of concern](#), or have been in contact with somebody who has traveled to these areas, should call ahead to their health care provider before seeking treatment in person. This is a rapidly changing situation. Please regularly check this site and the [CDC's Novel Coronavirus webpage](#) for updates.

Q: How long is a person with COVID19 contagious?

A: CDC believes at this time that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.

Q: Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

A: People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Q: Is there a treatment for COVID19?

A: Although most people with COVID19 will have mild symptoms similar to the flu, there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions. People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

Q: How do I protect myself? What is the best way to prevent COVID19?

A: There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including the flu:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC **does not recommend** that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For information about handwashing, see [CDC’s Handwashing](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/) website <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

For information specific to healthcare, see [CDC’s Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/index.html) <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/index.html>

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. CDC does have [specific guidance for travelers](#).

Q: How easily does the virus spread?

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. International Areas with Sustained (Ongoing) Transmission

Last updated February 28, 2020

- China ([Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#))
- Iran ([Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#))
- Italy ([Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#))
- Japan ([Level 2 Travel Health Notice](#))
- South Korea ([Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#))

Strongly consider avoiding travel to areas where community spread is ongoing and call Public Health Services or the NYS Department of Health coronavirus information line for travel advisory updates.

Q: Should I be concerned about pets or other animals and COVID19?

While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person in China. There is no reason to think that any animals including pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals.

Q: How should I respond to someone I think may have COVID19?

A: Unless you are a healthcare worker, you are not legally able to ask if someone has COVID19. If you suspect an individual in your presence has COVID19, immediately contact your supervisor, who can then contact Public Health Services for guidance. Do not refuse service to a member of the public based on an unconfirmed suspicion. There are many other common respiratory illnesses that may cause a fever, cough or shortness of breath.

Q: I've been exposed to someone who has COVID19. What should I do?

A: You may not know if you have been exposed to someone with COVID19 unless you are contacted by your health care provider or the health department. Immediately call the health department (845-292-5910 - EPI Department) and let them know if you think you may have been exposed to someone who has COVID19. Your doctor and the health department can help determine if you are at risk. Should you develop symptoms, your provider and the health department will advise you confidentially if restriction from public places or work is required for a period of time.

Q: I think I have COVID19. What should I do?

A: DO NOT GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM OR DOCTOR'S OFFICE. Instead, immediately call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Your healthcare professional will work with the public health department, NYS DOH and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Q: My doctor or healthcare worker confirmed I have COVID19 Now what?

A: If you have COVID19, you should stay home for 14 days. Staying home is an important way to not spread COVID19 to other people. Public health staff will advise you when it is safe to be around other people again. You should also:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and put your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to keep your hands clean.
 - Avoid sharing drinks or eating utensils.
 - Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, tables, and counters.
 - Call your doctor if you are concerned about your symptoms.
- Public health Services will be in touch to provide confidential support and daily monitoring of your symptoms

Knowledge is most definitely power in these situations, and acting out of awareness, rather than ignorance or fear, will be key to successfully responding to whatever happens in the coming months. I appreciate your time and dedication, both in reading this memo and in carrying out your County duties. If you have any questions not answered here, please access the following websites for further info:

- NYS Department of Health: <https://health.ny.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

You can also **Call the NYS Department of Health 1-888-364-3065 for Information about Coronavirus.**

Share the facts to help prevent the spread of rumors and unnecessary panic

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fshare-facts-stop-fear.html